

Missão ONU - N.Y.

Tle. 36 (anexo tel. 325) A

UNITED
NATIONS

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERALA/42/539
8 September 1987

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-second session
Item 114 of the provisional agenda*

QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Progress report of the Secretary-General

1. In my last progress report (A/40/522), dated 11 September 1985, I informed the General Assembly of the circumstances under which Indonesia and Portugal began substantive talks on the question of East Timor, under my auspices.
2. During the fortieth session of the General Assembly, I and Under-Secretary-General Rafeeuddin Ahmed, who has been assisting me in these endeavours, continued our consultations with the two Governments. On 23 September 1985, I hosted an informal working luncheon for Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja of Indonesia and then Foreign Minister Jaime Gama of Portugal. At that luncheon, the two Foreign Ministers agreed to continue the substantive talks, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement. On 24 October 1985, I had further discussions on the problem with the then President of Portugal, Mr. Ramalho Eanes.
3. In February and March 1986, the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and of Portugal held a series of informal consultations to prepare the agenda for the substantive talks, which resumed in early April. During the same period and in the course of the following months, I and Mr. Ahmed met on several occasions with the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. I also had the opportunity to discuss the issue with President Mario Soares of Portugal in May and again in July 1986. Concurrently, the substantive talks were pursued on a regular basis, until the convening of the forty-first session of the General Assembly.
4. On 12 September 1986, I issued a note (A/41/502), by which I informed the General Assembly that these talks were continuing. I stated that further meetings were scheduled in the coming weeks and that, under the circumstances, I was not in

A/42/539

English

Page 2

a position to submit a report to the Assembly at that time. On 20 September, the Assembly took note of the General Committee's decision to defer for the time being a decision on the inclusion of the item entitled "Question of East Timor".

5. During the forty-first session of the General Assembly, I and Mr. Ahmed had further contacts with the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. In addition, three rounds of the substantive talks were held between October 1986 and January 1987.

6. On 13 February 1987, I met in New York with Foreign Minister Mochtar of Indonesia. Subsequently, three more rounds of talks were held, in February, March and April of that year.

7. From 27 to 29 April 1987, I paid an official visit to Portugal, during which I exchanged views on the problem with President Soares, Prime Minister Cavaco Silva and then Foreign Minister Pires de Miranda. Following that visit, Mr. Ahmed met, on 20 May, with the Foreign Minister of Indonesia. Since then, the substantive talks have continued on a regular basis, in June, August and early September.

* * *

8. During the period under review, I have continued to closely follow the humanitarian situation of the people of East Timor.

9. In 1982, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) started a special project for children, mothers and their families in East Timor, as described in paragraph 17 of my last progress report. It is an integrated basic services project, comprising health, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, and community development components, which is being undertaken in close co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross. During the reporting period, the project continued to be implemented in seven sub-districts, with technical support provided by local authorities.

10. In early 1986, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began implementation of a programme for the repatriation of former Portuguese civil servants and their dependants, as agreed by both sides at the substantive talks, with funding provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. As at the end of August 1987, approximately 380 persons, representing more than three quarters of those currently identified as being eligible under this programme, had arrived in Lisbon in 15 groups. The remaining cases will be repatriated following the approval of the two Governments. In addition, the repatriation of a group of East Timorese who had been residing in Portugal took place, as also agreed at the substantive talks, in November 1986.

11. ICRC has also continued to carry out several programmes in the Territory for the benefit of the East Timorese people. In 1985, ICRC concluded an agreement with Indonesia permitting it to carry out medical and nutritional surveys on the main island, including follow-up visits to vulnerable areas. As a follow-up to the June 1985 survey, referred to in paragraph 22 of my last progress report, a visit to five vulnerable areas was made in December 1985. ICRC carried out another

/...

survey in August 1986, during which the medical and nutritional status of some 40,000 East Timorese, living in eight districts, was assessed. Follow-up visits to villages in four districts have been conducted in 1987.

12. In November 1985, ICRC began implementing a new protection programme, under which it conducts visits to East Timorese detainees. In 1986, three series of visits took place, in February/March, June and November. The first series of visits for 1987 took place in March/April and the second in August. A third series is planned for late 1987. All visits under the programme were carried out according to ICRC criteria. Each encompassed four places of detention, two in Jakarta and two in Dili.

13. During the reporting period, ICRC, in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross, has also continued an assistance programme for the benefit of needy families of detainees. In addition, at the beginning of 1987, ICRC initiated a programme to facilitate visits to those detainees being held in Jakarta whose family members who could not afford the cost of the trip. As at August 1987, 84 such family members had benefited from this programme.

14. The joint programme of ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross for relief assistance in favour of the displaced persons on Atauro Island continued in 1986. However, I have been informed that, in February 1987, the Atauro Island facility was officially closed, all displaced persons wishing to do so having been returned to the main island. Approximately 200 East Timorese have chosen to remain on Atauro. Accordingly, ICRC has since pared down its Atauro programme. In addition, ICRC has continued to implement its programme of surveys of previously displaced persons to assess the conditions of their resettlement on the main island. ICRC visited the districts of Cailaco and Manatuto in October 1985, Baucau and Aileu in May 1986, Same in November 1986, and Los Palos, Baucau, Viqueque and Ainaro in February, March and May 1987. Nearly 2,300 persons previously returned from Atauro Island were seen under this programme in 1987.

15. On the question of access, during the period under review, visits to the Territory by diplomatic personnel and some foreign journalists, including a Portuguese journalist, have continued. I was also pleased to learn that a member of the Portuguese Parliament visited East Timor, albeit in his personal capacity, in July 1986. It is my hope that the Government of Indonesia will continue to co-operate fully with the international humanitarian organisations working in the Territory and that this co-operation can be extended to other such organisations interested in providing assistance to the people of East Timor. I also hope that general access to East Timor can be further improved in the future.

* * *

16. In my 1985 progress report, I had expressed the hope that the substantive talks between Indonesia and Portugal would lead to a settlement of the question of East Timor. It is a matter of deep regret that this goal has not yet been achieved. None the less, the talks have enabled both sides to establish a useful dialogue and to make a serious attempt to bridge the differences in their

42/539
English
Page 4

respective positions. In this connection, the two sides are considering the possibility of a Portuguese Parliamentary delegation undertaking a visit to East Timor, with a view to obtaining first-hand information on the situation.

17. The two countries have reaffirmed their commitment to co-operate, under my auspices, in the search for a comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution. For my part, I have assured both sides that my good offices remain available and that I will continue to do whatever I can to facilitate the process of dialogue and the achievement of such a solution. I shall also continue to follow the humanitarian situation closely, with a view to promoting the further and steady improvement of conditions in the territory.